

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
INFORMATION REPORT

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1. In anticipation of further difficulties in the current shop union elections in East Berlin and East Germany, the FDGB Bundesvorstand has set up election brigades composed of full-time employees of the Bundesvorstand and of the directorates of the various trade unions subordinate to it. The members of these brigades have been relieved of all other assignments and are to devote their time exclusively to election preparation and supervision in the enterprises assigned to them. Each brigade consists of from three to five members and is responsible for certain specific VEB's. 25X1
2. The brigades are to function as follows: Upon arrival at the assigned enterprise, the brigade is to report not to the BGL (Betriebsgewerkschaftsleitung - Shop Union Directorate) but to the SED Party Secretary of the plant. They will advise the brigade as to the status of the election campaign and will call attention to any particular difficulties which have been encountered. They will furthermore report what the BPO (Betriebsparteiorganisation - Shop Party Directorate) has done to assure the proper outcome of the elections and will give a political characterization of the current BGL Chairman. If the BGL Chairman is not considered completely reliable by the SED, not he, but the most reliable SED members of the BGL will take part in the further consultations with the brigade. The BGL Chairman or the reliable SED BGL members, in turn, must then report what the BGL has done to promote successful elections. The brigade will thereupon review the protocols of past election assemblies. Next, the director of the cadre department will be consulted and an agreement will be reached as to the desirability of the proposed candidates. The criteria to be considered in selecting qualified candidates are:
  - a. Party membership prior to 1933
  - b. NSDAP membership
  - c. Rank held in the Wehrmacht
  - d. Present party membership
  - e. Behavior on 17 June 1953
  - f. Activities during the elections of October 1954
  - g. Activities during the West Berlin elections of December 1954
  - h. Participation in other West Berlin activities
  - i. Qualifications as a worker

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Finally, the chief cashier of the BGL is to render a report on the payment of FDGB membership dues.

3. In instances where the brigade is not satisfied with the political composition of the newly elected BGL, the election will be declared null and void and a new election scheduled. The members of the brigade and the most politically reliable SED members of the plant are to participate in this election. The reasons to be given for annulling the previous election can be:
  - a. That the election was invalid because the proper political considerations had not been emphasized; or
  - b. That there were not enough production workers in the BGL; or
  - c. There were too few women or youthful members in the BGL.
4. The brigades are to supervise the plants assigned to them until all trade-union elections have been concluded. They must see to it that all BGLs have at least 51% SED members. If it appears unlikely that this goal will be attained, even totally unqualified workers are to be elected, provided they are SED members. Even workers with no political affiliations who have done good work in previous BGLs are to be replaced by SED members.
5. One member of an FDGB brigade assigned the responsibility for five East Berlin VEBs reports that in the plants in which he worked the majority of the BGLs elected consisted of former SPD members, former NSDAP members, and workers who had been more or less openly against the SED régime during the revolt of 17 June 1953. SED members were not elected as a rule. He reports that unofficially the FDGB had planned to have no public discussions in the plants on the individual candidates for election to the BGLs. Instructions to this effect, however, failed to reach responsible FDGB and SED functionaries in the plants in time, so that many of the SED members on the list of candidates had been rejected by the voting workers as a result of what was said in the public discussions.
6. Among the main arguments the workers used against voting for the SED candidates was that these were not qualified to hold a BGL position because they had done no union work in the past. It was claimed that the SED members often were not properly qualified as workers and therefore couldn't act as representatives of their interests. The workers claimed that only they were qualified to decide which of their colleagues could best represent them.
7. The brigade member states further that the FDGB has had little difficulty in achieving the election results desired in the union groups of the factory directorates and in the Departments for Work (Abteilungen fuer Arbeit), since both of these groups are made up primarily of reliable SED members. Great difficulty, on the other hand, has been encountered among the production workers themselves and among the members of the so-called "technical intelligentsia". This condition obtains not only in East Berlin but also in East German plants.

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8. Among the main arguments against the politics of the SED used by production workers and members of the "technical intelligentsia" to members of FDGB brigades are the following:
- a. The leading role of the SED is acknowledged<sup>1</sup>. However, it is expected that SED members should be models for all other workers both technically and as individuals. In the majority of instances this is not the case. The Party would do better to rid itself of weak members instead of proposing them as candidates for the BGL.
  - b. The functionaries of the FDGB Bundesvorstand have completely divorced themselves from contact with the working classes and often do not represent the best interests of the workers, as, for example, in the norm question.
  - c. The necessary requirements for fulfilling the work plans are not present. It is the duty of the unions to intercede with the appropriate government departments so that the plans which are set up are truly realisable. There should be an end put to the practice of making individuals responsible for failures which in the last analysis are the result of faulty planning.
  - d. In one East Berlin plant the question was raised: if the DGB could strike against remilitarisation in West Germany, why couldn't the FDGB do the same in East Germany?

Comment: This introductory statement is to be regarded as merely tactical.

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Comment: The general feeling among the workers is that they are against rearmament. The impression gained is that the workers in the nationalised enterprises are opposed to the rearmament of the Federal Republic as well as of East Germany.

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